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author show how difficult the situation was. It is with this peculiarly interesting period of political upheaval that our author deals while nominally furnishing details concerning the life and character of a participant. Letters, speeches, official documents, contemporary publications, records in England and in America, furnish the facts which, strung upon a thread of narrative, portray the circumstances of the times, the character of the man, and the extent of his service. The story is told with evident attempt to throw off prejudice and do full justice to a man whose career made him the object of animadversion on the part of many of his contemporaries.

Professor Kimball several times in his narrative draws inferences from the fact that the council was elected by the representatives. The charter required the election of the council by the General Court. The difference was slight and the same inferences would probably be justified by changing "house of representatives" to "General Court" in these references. The assertion on page 89 that Elisha Cooke never sat in the council during Dudley's administration ought to be modified. Dudley relented, and in the fall of 1715 Cooke's name is to be found in the roll of councillors. The statement, page 193, that the charter "directed that in case of the absence or the death of the governor, the administration should devolve upon the lieutenant-governor, or in case of his incapacity, upon the eldest councillor", is not strictly correct; "entire council" should be substituted for "eldest councillor". The affairs of the province were administered several times by the executive council.

Such errors as these are insignificant in a work whose every page indicates patient industry. The author is to be congratulated on having set forth the history of an interesting period, and the friends of Dudley cannot say that he has not done the best he could to make out a case for the governor. The whole subject is opened up to the student by an excellent index.

ANDREW M. F. DAVIS.

France in the American Revolution. By JAMES BRECK PERKINS.
(Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1911.
Pp. xix, 544.)

A SPECIAL interest is attached to this book from the fact that it is the last in a series of notable studies in French history which constitute the writer's title to a place among American historians.

The present volume, published more than a year after the author's death, has been prepared for the press under the supervision of Mrs. Perkins with the valuable aid of Professor Van Tyne of the University of Michigan—a sufficient assurance that we have before us the result of careful editing.

A further tribute to the labors of Mr. Perkins is paid in the introduction to the book written by the French ambassador at Washington,

M. Jusserand, who embraces the opportunity not only to commend the tone and substance of this history but to emphasize the sympathetic attitude of France toward the struggle of the American colonies for independence.

The aim of the author evidently was to present a complete and well-rounded delineation of the part played by France in the liberation of the colonies. To set this in full relief Mr. Perkins begins with a description of the financial, military, and moral condition of the colonies before the French intervention, showing, largely from the writings of Washington, how desperate that condition was. Then follow a rapid summary of the contest between France and England for empire in America, an excellent account of the negotiation and significance of the treaty of Paris, and an analysis of the diplomacy of Vergennes.

In estimating the motives that led to active intervention on the part of France Mr. Perkins exemplifies the admirable balance that is perhaps his most characteristic quality as an historian. His view is that France would inevitably have become our ally, no matter who was at the head of her foreign department; but it was in fact the cautiously exercised influence of Vergennes that overcame the sluggish indifference of Louis XVI., who certainly had no admiration for revolutionists.

But, like every prudent statesman, Vergennes was unwilling to embroil his country in a foreign quarrel without the prospect of advantage from it; and in 1775 he wrote: "The spirit of revolt, wherever it appears, is always a dangerous example." It was not therefore until Franklin had exercised his potent influence, the sentiments of the French people had been touched by the struggle for freedom, and the cause itself had made such advance as to render its triumph certain if aid were promptly furnished, that Vergennes counselled an open alliance with the colonies.

Even from the beginning however public opinion in France was favorable to the colonists, and the government itself was unofficially helpful. It is in the record of the development and expression of this real but officially unavowed friendliness that the dramatic interest of this period of history very largely consists. With strict fidelity to the documentary evidence, Mr. Perkins follows the negotiations of Deane and Franklin and the extraordinary activities of Beaumarchais. The official transactions reveal what we should expect them to reveal, a constant display of political prudence. The mental attitude of Vergennes with regard to the colonists is well expressed in his letter of January 12, 1777, to the Spanish minister. "We know", he says, "that republics are less sensible than monarchies to the requirements of honor, and that they regard fidelity to their engagements only as a means to advance their interests, by which alone their action is determined." With the example of the treatment received by Beaumarchais before him, the minister could have proved that his strictures were not mere innuendo.

While, as Mr. Perkins fully demonstrates, the aid furnished by France certainly shortened, and in the circumstances determined, the

issue of the struggle, there was in the policy of the monarchy no sentiment whatever. Everything was done by deliberate calculation. But, on the other hand, it is not doubtful that the sympathetic attitude of the French nation was an element in that calculation which cannot justly be overlooked.

In the use of authorities Mr. Perkins has displayed intelligence, and has indicated his sources with precision. Strictly original research was not necessary for his purpose. Doniol, Wharton, Loménie, and Durand had rendered accessible the most important contents of the archives, and the period is rich in personal letters, memoirs, and biographies.

Mr. Perkins's enduring title to a place among historians will rest chiefly upon his sincere love of truth, his diligence in seeking it, his sound judgment of men and policies, his lucid style, and his artistic sense of fitness and proportion. His early ambition was to be a man of letters, and in this he was easily successful.

It is due to him as a fellow craftsman that there should be placed on record in this REVIEW some mention of his great merits as a patriotic citizen and as a public officer. His personal purity in politics and his devotion to the public interest were conspicuous. As a representative in Congress through several terms he rose to be chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, a position which he filled with distinguished ability. It was the expressed intention of the President to appoint him to a high diplomatic post, which he would have adorned. His death was a loss to the nation as well as to historical literature, but he had already won a secure place among scholars in statesmanship.

DAVID J. HILL.

The Origin and Growth of the American Constitution: an Historical Treatise. By HANNIS TAYLOR, Hon. LL.D. of the Universities of Edinburgh and Dublin. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1911. Pp. xlii, 676.)

AFTER thirty years of study of the origin and development of the English and American constitutions, Mr. Taylor considers himself amply rewarded in having discovered a "priceless document" that "explains for the first time the real history of the invention of that marvellous system of government . . . given to the world by the Federal Convention" in 1787. The document in question is Pelatiah Webster's *Dissertation on the Political Union and Constitution of the Thirteen United States of North America*, published in 1783. Of this it is only necessary to say that it has always been known to students of the subject, who have not been inclined to Mr. Taylor's view of its importance but who, without disparaging Webster's originality and power of thought, have generally believed that the American Constitution would have taken its present form if the pamphlet in question had never been written, or, indeed, if Webster himself had never lived.